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ABSTRACT

A utility processing system includes a utility processor which accepts utility metering and pricing data as inputs and outputs consumption decisions and usage and billing information. In accordance with one aspect of the invention, the utility processor obtains metering data from utility meters located at remote consumer facilities and obtains utility pricing data from the Internet. The utility processor then uses an optimization algorithm to determine an optimum consumption decision. In accordance with another aspect of the invention, the optimum consumption decision can include purchasing electricity from the grid, generating electricity using a Distributed Generation ("DG") system, conserving electricity using a Demand-Side Management ("DSM") system, and switching to alternative fuel sources. In accordance with still another aspect of the invention, the utility processor provides various pricing, billing, and usage data to customers.

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